



NATO's 60th Anniversary Summit

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Summary

On April 3 and 4, 2009, the heads of state and government of the 26 members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) will meet in Strasbourg, France, and Kehl, Germany for a summit marking the 60th anniversary of the alliance. The summit will be one of three stops on President Obama's first official visit to Europe as President. Alliance leaders are expected to use the anniversary summit to pay tribute to NATO's past achievements and to reaffirm their commitment to the alliance as the preeminent transatlantic security framework. They will also complete a new round of NATO enlargement, seek common positions on the range of challenges currently facing the alliance, and begin to set the parameters for NATO's future direction.

The key issue facing the alliance is the ongoing mission in Afghanistan, where allied governments are struggling to reach a strategic consensus on how to stabilize the country. The deteriorating security situation in the country has caused many to question the ability of NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to achieve its objectives and has exposed rifts within the alliance as to ISAF's mission and the appropriate means to accomplish it. NATO's strained relations with Russia are a second key issue. The allies have announced that they will resume formal ties with Russia after having suspended relations in the NATO-Russia Council following Russia's August 2008 invasion of Georgia. However, alliance members continue to disagree on how to manage relations with Russia and their other eastern neighbors in the future.

NATO enlargement will be a third issue on the summit agenda. Albania and Croatia are expected to officially join the alliance at the summit and discussions on the stalled membership prospects of Macedonia, Georgia, and Ukraine could continue. In what some observers believe could be a symbol of renewed European commitment to NATO, France is expected to announce its full reintegration into NATO's integrated military command structure. Additional issues facing the alliance include: the future of a proposed U.S. missile defense system to be deployed in Poland and the Czech Republic; the direction of NATO-EU relations; an on-going debate over capabilities, the size of defense budgets, and burdensharing among the allies; and NATO's role in addressing a range of emerging challenges including arms control and weapons proliferation, energy security, and international terrorism. To this end, the allies are expected to discuss a timeframe for the drafting of a new Strategic Concept as a means to clarify NATO's purpose and future direction.

The 111th Congress could play a decisive role in shaping NATO's response to the aforementioned challenges. Congressional action could include hearings and/or legislation on: NATO's 60th anniversary and the future of the alliance; NATO's mission in Afghanistan and the refinement of military-led reconstruction efforts; the qualifications of candidate states for allied membership; establishing an improved NATO-EU relationship; and the military capabilities of NATO member states. In addition, the Senate could vote on a revision to the North Atlantic Treaty covering expanded geographic space should the allies agree to invite Macedonia to join the alliance.

This report provides an overview and analysis of the key issues to be discussed at NATO's April summit. It will be updated after the summit to reflect summit outcomes and implications for U.S. policy.

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Introduction¹

On April 3 and 4, 2009, the heads of state and government of the 26 members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) will meet in Strasbourg, France, and Kehl, Germany for a summit marking the 60th anniversary of the alliance. They will be joined by the leaders of Albania and Croatia, expected to become the two newest members of the alliance at the summit. The summit will be one of three stops on President Obama's first official visit to Europe as President. Summit proceedings are likely to focus on three broad areas: a "look-back" and celebration of alliance achievements; NATO's latest round of enlargement; and current and future challenges facing the alliance. First and foremost, alliance leaders will pay tribute to the past achievements and evolution of the alliance and will reaffirm their commitment to NATO as the preeminent transatlantic security framework. Second, Albania and Croatia are expected to be welcomed into NATO and France plans to formally announce its full reintegration into NATO's integrated military command structure after a 43 year absence. Third, the summit will address NATO's current operations and agenda and begin to set the parameters for its future evolution. Alliance leaders are also expected to announce the successor to NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, who will step down in August after serving a four-year term and a one year extension.

Summit co-hosts France and Germany chose the anniversary summit's location along a historically much-disputed portion of the French-German border as a testament to NATO's pivotal role in forging a Europe "whole, free, and at peace." At the summit, NATO leaders will pay tribute to alliance achievements over what could be considered four phases of its evolution: its success in providing for the collective defense of its members and preventing the spread of communism during the Cold War; its ongoing role in assisting the peaceful transition to democratic governance in former communist states, including through enlargement to 12 of these states; its first "out of area" peacekeeping missions beginning in the Balkans in the 1990s; and its post September 11, 2001 evolution in the face of new asymmetric threats -- marked by the first ever invocation of NATO's collective defense clause after the September 11 terrorist attacks against the United States and the alliance's ongoing mission in Afghanistan.²

The summit will also focus on the formidable challenges currently facing NATO and on a broad range of uncertainties and divergent opinions about the future of the alliance. The key issue facing the alliance is the ongoing mission in Afghanistan, where allied governments are struggling to reach a strategic consensus on how to stabilize the country. NATO has staked its reputation on success in Afghanistan by deploying a force of over 60,000 troops, extolling the alliance's capability for global reach, and expending resources to rebuild the political and economic infrastructure of the country. NATO's strained relations with Russia are a second key issue. The allies are expected to announce a resumption of formal ties with Russia after having suspended relations in the NATO-Russia Council following Russia's August 2008 invasion of Georgia. However, alliance members continue to disagree on how to manage relations with

¹ This section was prepared by Paul Belkin, Analyst in European Affairs, with contributions from Vincent Morelli, Section Research Manager, Europe and the Americas Section.

² For more background information on NATO see the appendices and the NATO Handbook available at <http://www.nato.int/docu/handbook/2006/hb-en-2006.pdf>

Russia and NATO's other eastern neighbors in the future. The summit will also likely address additional issues such as future enlargement, including to Georgia and Ukraine; the direction of NATO's relations with the European Union (EU); an on-going debate over capabilities; and NATO's role in addressing a range of additional challenges including arms control and weapons proliferation, energy security, and international terrorism.

Finally, alliance leaders could agree to a timeframe for the drafting of a new Strategic Concept as a means to clarify NATO's purpose and future direction. Proponents of a new strategic concept argue that the existing concept, written in 1999, does not adequately reflect events that have transpired since the terrorist attacks of 2001 and that it lacks a long-term vision that can be effectively communicated to the public. While most allies appear to continue to support NATO "transformation," including, among other things, "out of area missions," some argue that NATO should be more selective when deciding to confront new security challenges. Differences over whether NATO should continue to evolve into a "global," "expeditionary" alliance or refocus on territorial defense could cause considerable friction among the allies.

NATO's Current Agenda and Issues for the Summit

Afghanistan³

Since taking over responsibility for the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in August 2003, NATO has deployed a sizeable force and devoted significant resources to fighting the Taliban and other insurgents. However, the deteriorating security situation in the country has caused many to question NATO's ability to achieve its objectives and has exposed rifts within the alliance as to ISAF's mission and the appropriate means to accomplish it. The Obama Administration has announced its intention to significantly increase U.S. participation in ISAF in the coming year. In late March, it is expected to complete a strategic review of U.S. policy in the Afghanistan/Pakistan region that could serve as a basis for discussions on the future direction of ISAF.

NATO allies have generally welcomed the renewed U.S. focus on Afghanistan. They appear particularly encouraged by the Administration's regional approach – especially its emphasis on Pakistan and its apparent willingness to engage Iran in discussions of the mission – and by its emphasis on improving civilian capacity- and institution-building efforts in Afghanistan. On the other hand, there is concern in some allied nations that significant U.S. troop increases and a continued reluctance in many allied countries to increase troop contributions to ISAF could lead to an "Americanization" of the mission that may limit allied influence in decision-making.⁴

³ This section and subsequent sections on NATO-Russia relations, NATO enlargement, and French reintegration prepared by Paul Belkin, Analyst in European Affairs. For more information on NATO's mission in Afghanistan see CRS Report RL33627, *NATO in Afghanistan: A Test of the Transatlantic Alliance*, by Vincent Morelli and Paul Belkin; and CRS Report R40156, *War in Afghanistan: Strategy, Military Operations, and Issues for Congress*, by Catherine Dale.

⁴ Interviews of European officials, December 2008 – March 2009.

As of March 2009, there were approximately 62,000 troops from 42 countries in ISAF, with NATO members providing the core of the force. The United States has close to 30,000 troops in ISAF, and another 14,000 serving under U.S. command as part of *Operation Enduring Freedom* (OEF).⁵ The largest ISAF troop deployments come from the United States, the UK (8,300), Germany (3,640), France (2,780), Canada (2,830), Italy (2,350), the Netherlands (1,770), and Poland (1,590).⁶ Forces from the United States, Britain, Canada, the Netherlands, and Denmark serve in the eastern and southern regions of Afghanistan where they face the strongest insurgent challenges and bear the brunt of the fighting. The inequity of burden-sharing in combat operations remains an important point of contention in the alliance, and could be a factor in domestic opposition to the mission in states that contribute the most combat forces.

President Obama's February 2009 announcement that the United States will send an additional 17,000 troops to Afghanistan – primarily under ISAF command – has raised expectations for increased troop contributions from other allies. NATO's civilian and military leadership and allied governments active in the more violent southern and eastern parts of the country have consistently called for troop increases from other allies, and for an easing of the "caveats" by which national governments restrict the use of their forces. Caveats, in particular, pose difficult problems for commanders, who seek maximum flexibility in utilizing troops under their command. For example, though they make up the third-largest troop contingent in ISAF, German forces are confined to the northern part of the country and are largely restricted from conducting offensive armed operations with their Afghan counterparts. In other instances, allied forces lack the appropriate equipment to fulfill designated tasks and/or function effectively together with other NATO forces. NATO commanders consistently cite a lack of high-flying helicopters and other support equipment vital to the mission's success.

Although there is some indication that some allies – notably France and the UK – could respond to the enhanced U.S. role in ISAF by increasing their participation in the coming year, observers do not expect the European allies or Canada to announce any significant troop increases at the April summit.⁷ The continued reluctance of some allies to increase troop levels or ease operational caveats is rooted largely in strong public opposition to the ISAF mission in many European countries and what many consider a lack of clarity regarding the way forward in Afghanistan. Officials in some allied countries also point out that increased deployments to Afghanistan could come at the expense of contributions to other peacekeeping and stabilization missions. European allies are currently the main contributors to NATO's ongoing mission in Kosovo and to the U.N.'s mission in Lebanon.⁸

In an apparent acknowledgement of the constraints facing some allied governments, U.S. officials say they will refrain from making public requests for specific allies to increase troop

⁵ The missions of those forces serving under U.S. command include suppressing Al Qaeda and Taliban insurgents along the Afghan-Pakistan border.

⁶ NATO, *ISAF "Placemat"*, March 13, 2009, http://www.nato.int/isaf/docu/epub/pdf/isaf_placemat.pdf. Note: the numbers of "boots-on-the-ground" are approximations due to regular unit rotations and the different ways in which the U.S. Joint Staff and ISAF account for personnel.

⁷ Interviews of U.S., European, and NATO officials December 2008 - March 2009.

⁸ Some observers believe Spain's March 2009 decision to withdraw 600 peacekeepers from Kosovo was at least partly influenced by its desire to boost its deployment in Afghanistan. See Victoria Burnett, "Spain Plans to Withdraw Peacekeepers from Kosovo," *International Herald Tribune*, March 19, 2009.

contributions at the April summit. Instead, they emphasize the need to build allied unity behind a clear and revitalized strategy for the Afghan mission, and have sought input from allied nations on the U.S. strategic review of its Afghanistan strategy.⁹ As mentioned, the allies have commended the Administration's regional approach and its apparent emphasis on boosting contributions of civilian advisors and experts in Afghanistan. NATO also appears supportive of the Administration's reported decision to engage local leaders and Taliban supporters not affiliated with Islamic extremism in an effort to persuade them to lay down their arms.¹⁰

The Obama Administration appears intent on seeking to use its strategic review and a reaffirmation of NATO's commitment to ISAF as a starting point from which to urge broader allied engagement in the mission. This could include calls for substantial increases in financial assistance and supplies for development and institution-building efforts; police, judicial, and governance assistance and training; and funding for the Afghan National Security Forces. Administration and NATO officials specifically highlight police training as a key area where European allies have the ability and expertise to contribute more resources.¹¹ At the summit, allied leaders are also expected to discuss a U.S. proposal to increase NATO member and non-member financial contributions to a trust fund for the Afghan National Army (ANA). In addition, Administration and NATO officials hope to gain shorter-term troop and personnel commitments to ensure secure presidential and provincial elections scheduled for August 2009. Among other things, this includes filling previously made allied commitments to the 26 civil/military Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) which are at the core of NATO's efforts to help rebuild Afghanistan by constructing schools, roads, hospitals, and training local officials to improve governance.

An ongoing problem is Afghanistan's narcotics production, which continues to expand, and to fuel the Taliban insurgency.¹² ISAF was not initially authorized to play a direct role in the counter-narcotics effort by, for example, destroying poppy fields or processing facilities and apprehending drug traffickers. Nevertheless, NATO commanders were instructed to provide assistance to local counter-narcotics authorities. The allies have also provided training, intelligence, and logistics to Afghan army units and police who destroy poppy fields and opium labs.¹³ In October 2008, NATO leaders agreed to authorize ISAF forces to act with Afghan forces against opium labs and other facilities that produce drugs to finance the Taliban when that connection could be demonstrated. However, some allies have reportedly objected to the order, arguing that their laws do not permit their soldiers to engage in counter-narcotics operations.¹⁴ Some allies have also argued that NATO's role in a counter-narcotics effort could have a negative

⁹ Edward Cody, "Biden Asks NATO for Aid in Afghanistan," *Washington Post*, March 11, 2009; "Biden Warns of 'Deteriorating' Afghan Situation," *New York Times*, March 10, 2009.

¹⁰ Helene Cooper and Thom Shanker, "Obama Afghan Plan Focuses on Pakistan Aid and Appeal to Militants," March 12, 2009.

¹¹ In May 2007, the EU accepted a request by NATO to take the lead in training Afghanistan's police. The European police (EUPOL) training mission began in June 2007 with an initial mandate of three years. The effort has faltered thus far for several reasons, including delays in recruiting qualified personnel and strained relations with NATO.

¹² For more information on the narcotics issue, see CRS Report RL32686, *Afghanistan: Narcotics and U.S. Policy*, by Christopher M. Blanchard.

¹³ Testimony of Director Negroponte, "Annual Threat Assessment," Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, January 11, 2007.

¹⁴ "Obstacles arise in Bid to Curb Afghan Trade in Narcotics," *New York Times*, December 23, 2008.

impact on communities that rely on the opium trade for their economic livelihood, especially if that trade is not directly linked to support for the Taliban insurgents.

NATO-Russia Relations

In 2008, relations between NATO and Russia reached what most observers consider their lowest point since the end of the Cold War.¹⁵ Russia vocally opposed alliance proposals to strengthen NATO ties with Georgia and Ukraine, and Moscow's opposition to proposed U.S. missile defense installations in Poland and the Czech Republic has fueled contentious debate about the merits of the U.S. plans. Tensions between NATO and Russia escalated in the wake of Russia's August 2008 invasion of Georgia, after which the sides suspended formal ties in the NATO-Russia Council (NRC). Low-level cooperation between NATO and Russia resumed in late 2008, and on March 5, 2009 NATO foreign ministers agreed to a U.S.-German proposal to resume full diplomatic ties with Russia in the NRC. The full resumption of NATO-Russia ties is expected to be announced at the April summit.

Russian leaders tend to characterize NATO's eastern enlargement as an infringement on Moscow's traditional "sphere of influence," and have long sought international recognition of Russian-led security initiatives in the former Soviet sphere. Russian concerns appear to have been a key factor in some European allies' opposition to U.S. proposals to extend NATO Membership Action Plans (MAPs) to Georgia and Ukraine at NATO's April 2008 summit in Bucharest, Romania. Supporters of a MAP for Georgia have subsequently argued that closer ties between NATO and Georgia could have dissuaded Russia from invading last summer. Opponents, including German and French officials, counter that such an arrangement could have drawn NATO into a dangerous and unwanted confrontation with Russia. In any case, Russia's actions, and particularly its invasion of Georgia, have intensified debate within NATO about how the alliance should manage relations with its eastern neighbors and with Russia itself. Some allies, most notably Poland and Lithuania, advocate a firmer NATO stance toward Russia and warn against granting Russia what could effectively be considered veto power over alliance decisions on matters such as enlargement. Others, like Germany, tend to advocate increased engagement with Moscow as the most effective means to influence Russian behavior.

Moscow has sent mixed signals to NATO and the United States since President Obama's election. Russia has announced its willingness to open a NATO supply route to Afghanistan through its territory and has said that it would abandon plans to deploy short-range missiles to the Russian-Polish border. On the other hand, some observers see Russia's hand behind the Kyrgyz government's February 2009 announcement that it would cancel the U.S. lease on an air base in Manas that is used by the United States and other NATO allies to supply troops in Afghanistan. On March 17, Russian President Dimitri Medvedev announced plans for an ambitious overhaul of Russia's armed forces, citing among other things, a need to address "attempts to expand the military infrastructure of NATO near Russia's borders."¹⁶ Russian officials also continue to

¹⁵ See, for example, Ellen Barry, "Russia works angles to prod Obama," *International Herald Tribune*, February 6, 2009.

¹⁶ See Philip Pan, "Medvedev Pushes Plan to Remake Russian Military," *Washington Post*, March 18, 2009.

advocate a new European security architecture that some see as an attempt to undermine NATO's influence in the region and block U.S. missile defense plans.¹⁷

Although it has strongly criticized some aspects of Russian foreign policy, the Obama Administration has signaled its intention to pursue a path of constructive engagement with Moscow and has advocated that NATO do the same. Following Vice President Biden's February announcement that the United States would "press the reset button [on relations with Russia]," U.S. officials have emphasized the need to engage Russia in an effort to improve U.S.- and NATO–Russia cooperation in areas ranging from ISAF's mission in Afghanistan and counter-terrorism, to arms control and non-proliferation and international efforts to curb Iran's nuclear program.¹⁸ NATO Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer reiterated this position after NATO foreign ministers agreed to resume formal ties with Russia on March 5, saying that "Russia is an important player. Russia is a global player, and that means that not talking to them is not an option."¹⁹ At the same time, NATO and U.S. officials stress that they will continue to condemn Russian policies that they perceive as conflicting with the core values of the alliance. They say, for example, that NATO will not recognize a Russian sphere of influence outside its borders and will continue to reject Russia's recognition of Georgia's breakaway regions, Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

Observers and officials in some allied nations express concern that NATO's reengagement with Russia could signal that the alliance is not serious about standing up to Russian behavior it has at least rhetorically deemed unacceptable. For example, they argue that NATO's inability or unwillingness to prevent Russia from moving to establish a permanent military presence in Abkhazia and South Ossetia could lead some to question the credibility of the alliance's core principle of collective defense. Although Georgia is not a member of the alliance, critics contend that NATO has given the impression that it could concede to Russian demands in its relations with aspiring alliance members.²⁰ Alliance leaders are expected to acknowledge such concerns at the April summit by reaffirming their commitment to collective defense and reiterating their support for eventual Georgian and Ukrainian NATO membership.

NATO continues its internal debate over U.S. missile defense proposals.²¹ The Bush Administration proposed building a site in Poland with 10 interceptors and an associated radar system in the Czech Republic. The Administration contended that the sites would assist in the defense of Europe and the United States against a developing Iranian missile threat. Russia contends that the sites are directed against its ballistic missiles. In November 2008, less than a day after President Obama's election, Russian President Dimitri Medvedev announced that Russia

¹⁷ Russia reportedly hopes to convene an all-European security conference later this year to discuss its proposals for a new European security architecture. Some European allies, including Germany and France, have expressed a willingness to support such a summit and to consider Russian proposals. However, they consistently affirm their commitment to NATO and the transatlantic relationship as the primary European security mechanism. For more information see Oxford Analytica, *Russia/Europe: Scepticism greets security proposals*, January 13, 2009.

¹⁸ See Remarks by Vice President Biden at the 45th Munich Security Conference, February 7, 2009, http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/RemarksbyVicePresidentBidenat45thMunichConferenceonSecurityPolicy/

¹⁹ See Andre de Nesnera, "NATO, Russia Revive Dialogue," *Voice of America News*, March 12, 2009.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ For more information on U.S. missile defense proposals see CRS Report RL34051, *Long-Range Ballistic Missile Defense in Europe*, by Steven A. Hildreth and Carl Ek.

would deploy Iskander cruise missiles in Kaliningrad – near the Polish border – to “neutralize” the proposed U.S. system. Russia is reported to have since dropped the plans.²²

The U.S. missile defense plans, and Russia’s reaction, have been a source of tension within the alliance. Some critics believe that the system would not adequately cover NATO Europe, and that it should be “bolted on” to a prospective NATO system. Others argue that the proposed missile system has not undergone “real world, robust testing.”²³ Those opposed to the U.S. proposal welcomed initial reports that the Obama Administration would move slowly at best in advancing the missile defense plans. In February, Vice President Biden said that the United States would continue to pursue the missile defense program – “provided the technology is proven and cost-effective” -- but that it would also seek to consult more closely with the Europeans and Russians on the plan. The Administration has denied subsequent reports suggesting that it has offered to consider dropping the missile defense plans in exchange for Russian cooperation on other issues such as the Iranian nuclear program.²⁴

NATO Enlargement²⁵

Albania and Croatia are expected to officially join the alliance at the April summit. The allies extended invitations to both countries at last year’s Bucharest summit and all 26 member states have since ratified their membership bids.²⁶ Albania and Croatia are small countries, with correspondingly small militaries. In the sense of their military importance and general resources, neither country represents a “strategic” presence in the alliance, although their contributions to NATO operations have been commended. However, with some continuing instability in the Balkan region, further stirred by Serbia’s sharply negative reaction to Kosovo’s independence, the two countries are a potential factor for stabilization in southeastern Europe.

Little if any progress has been made in advancing Macedonia’s stalled candidacy for NATO membership. The allies agreed at Bucharest that Macedonia met the qualifications for membership. However, Greece blocked a membership invitation due to a protracted dispute over Macedonia’s name. The two sides have since been unable to resolve the issue during talks sponsored by the U.N. Macedonia asserts its right to use and be recognized by its constitutional name, the Republic of Macedonia. Greece objects, claiming that the name usurps Greece’s heritage and conveys irredentist ambitions against Greece’s largest province, also called “Macedonia,” which borders the former Yugoslav republic. Macedonian officials counter that they have amended the Macedonian constitution to renounce all territorial claims on Greece or

²² Luke Harding, “Medvedev moves to tighten Russian leadership’s grip on power,” *The Guardian*, November 6, 2008; Ellen Barry, “Russia works angles to prod Obama,” *International Herald Tribune*, February 6, 2009.

²³ Interviews with U.S. and Polish officials, 2007-2008; “New team in Poland cool to U.S. shield,” *Washington Post*, Jan. 19, 2008, p. A18.; interview of Boeing official, Feb. 1, 2008.

²⁴ Peter Baker, “Obama Offered Deal to Russia in Secret Letter,” *New York Times*, March 2, 2009. Helene Cooper and Nicholas Kulish, “Biden hints at compromise with Russia on missile defense plan,” *International Herald Tribune*, February 8, 2009.

²⁵ For more information on NATO enlargement see CRS Report RL34701, *NATO Enlargement: Albania, Croatia, and Possible Future Candidates*, by Vincent Morelli et al.

²⁶ The U.S. Senate ratified the accession protocols for Albania and Croatia by Division Vote on September 25, 2008 (Treaty Number 110-20).

any neighboring country, and have changed the country's flag to eliminate possible reference to Greece's northern province.

As discussed above, debate over whether to place Georgia and Ukraine in NATO's MAP process has caused controversy in the alliance. Although the allies pledged at Bucharest and again at a December 2008 foreign ministers' meeting that Georgia and Ukraine would eventually become NATO members, they have not specified when that might happen. The Russia-Georgia conflict and continued political instability in Ukraine appear to have further diminished the short- and even medium-term membership prospects for both countries. This was reflected at the December 2008 meeting when NATO foreign ministers agreed to a U.S. proposal to continue talks with the countries within the framework of the Georgia-NATO and Ukraine-NATO councils rather than the MAP process. Observers viewed the Bush Administration's decision to back away from its initially strong support of MAPs for Georgia and Ukraine as a concession to European allied calls to slow NATO's enlargement process. While the allies have not ruled out the possibility of future membership for Georgia and Ukraine, analysts view the shift to what some consider the more informal council structure as a tacit agreement to indefinitely postpone the membership timeline for the countries.²⁷

French Reintegration into NATO's Integrated Command Structure

At the April summit, French President Nicolas Sarkozy is expected to announce France's full reintegration into NATO's integrated military command structure. France is currently the fourth largest contributor of troops to alliance operations and a significant financial contributor to NATO. However, it has had only very limited participation in the alliance's military decision-making structures since then- President Charles de Gaulle withdrew the country from NATO's integrated command structure in 1966.²⁸ Despite domestic opposition from critics who fear that the move could limit French military independence, the French parliament approved Sarkozy's decision by a vote of 329-238 on March 17, 2009. U.S. officials have welcomed French reintegration as an important step toward improving alliance cohesion and strengthening the European role within NATO.²⁹

French officials hope that full reintegration into NATO will give France a level of influence in determining the strategic direction and planning decisions of the alliance that is proportional to its participation in alliance operations. Practically speaking, French four-star generals are expected to fill two NATO command posts – Allied Command Transformation (ACT) in Norfolk, Virginia and the Allied Joint Command regional headquarters in Lisbon, Portugal -- and approximately

²⁷ Interviews of U.S., European, and NATO officials, December 2008 – March 2009.

²⁸ President de Gaulle withdrew France from NATO's integrated command structure in 1966 and ordered U.S. military personnel to leave the country. However, France remained in NATO's political wing and maintained a seat on the North Atlantic Council (NAC), the alliance's political decision-making body. Since the mid-1990s France has participated more actively in NATO operations, and Paris has sent an observer to the alliance's Military Committee, where key military planning and operational decisions are made.

²⁹ See Vice President Biden's remarks at the 2009 Munich Security Conference, *op. cit.*

800 French officers will reportedly be integrated into command structures at NATO headquarters.³⁰

What role France will play in determining the strategic direction of the alliance remains to be seen. However, some observers draw attention to France's past opposition to U.S. and UK calls for a more "global NATO" defined by enhanced partnerships with countries outside the core NATO area such as Australia and Japan. French officials have also argued that NATO should consult more closely with Russia before considering further enlargement and have indicated that NATO should concentrate on its core mission of defense and leave political and reconstruction activities to other international institutions (such as the EU and U.N.).³¹ Other observers point to Sarkozy's willingness to break with tradition to argue that past policy positions could be of little consequence in France's future approach to the alliance.

Sarkozy has sought alliance and U.S. support for a strong European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP), including development of a full command and planning structure for its forces. France has argued that a robust and independent European defense capacity could reinforce and complement NATO. However, some critics in Europe and the United States argue that a separate European command structure could rival NATO's large planning cell, elements of which the EU now uses for its operations, and would be a wasteful duplication of resources. That said, U.S. officials have welcomed French calls to develop Europe's security and defense capacity, which they view as a complement to, not a substitute for, NATO. As one U.S. supporter of French reintegration notes, "Every step taken by France to improve the cohesiveness and efficiency of NATO will sooner or later benefit European defense as well – in terms of capabilities, interoperability and operational performance."³²

NATO's Strategic Concept and Emerging Challenges³³

A new NATO Strategic Concept is a fifth issue for the Summit agenda. With the current version dating to 1999, some officials and observers have called for the creation of a new Strategic Concept that provides clarified and updated guidance for NATO's mission and activities. The Comprehensive Political Guidance endorsed at the 2006 Riga Summit was a step in this direction, but for a variety of reasons the Bush Administration and the European allies did not set a timeline for a process leading to a new Strategic Concept.³⁴ With the start of the new U.S. administration, however, supporters of an updated Strategic Concept hope that progress can be made. The summit's Declaration on Alliance Security is expected to serve as a foundation and impetus for a new Strategic Concept that could be approved in 2010.

³⁰ Today, France contributes two one-star flag officers to NATO headquarters and provides approximately one percent of NATO headquarters staffers. Interviews of European officials, March 2009; Steven Erlanger, "Sarkozy Embraces NATO, and Bigger Role for France," *New York Times*, March 8, 2009; Leo Michel, "Sarkozy's Next Big Battle," *Newsweek*, February 23, 2009.

³¹ See, for example, Jamey Keaten, "U.S. Vision of 'global NATO' runs counter to role sought by France," Associated Press, March 18, 2009.

³² Leo Michel, op. cit.

³³ Prepared by Derek Mix, Analyst in European Affairs.

³⁴ See Comprehensive Political Guidance, Endorsed by NATO Heads of State and Government on 29 November 2006. <http://www.nato.int/docu/basic/txt/b061129e.htm>

Debate over the Strategic Concept and Different Visions of NATO

There are three prevalent criticisms of the current Strategic Concept.³⁵ First, because it was written in 1999, many observe that the worldview reflected in the document has become outdated, and that it therefore does not devote sufficient attention to issues such as terrorism nor incorporate the nature and reach of NATO missions undertaken over the past ten years, particularly in Afghanistan.³⁵ Second, the guidelines set down in the Strategic Concept tend to be very broad, permitting competing interpretations of NATO's possible mandates and responsibilities when it comes to a number of specific questions. Third, the Strategic Concept does not settle the wider philosophical debates over NATO's proper vocation.

Such debates center on three interrelated themes: 1) some members of NATO believe that its future relevance depends on a capacity to conduct "out-of-area" operations, while others believe NATO should focus on territorial and collective defense; 2) some members of NATO advocate a continued enlargement and formal partnerships with like-minded countries, while others worry that a "Global NATO" means strategic drift, overstretch, and undesirable new security commitments; and 3) some members of NATO support expanding its "soft" capabilities related to tasks such as crisis management and stabilization and reconstruction, while others prefer that NATO focus more exclusively on "hard" military power.

Supporters of writing a new Strategic Concept argue that a clear, specific, and up-to-date version would provide NATO with much-needed vision and a more clear sense of purpose. Critics observe, however, that strategic concepts, like all NATO policy documents, are consensus documents to which all 26 NATO members must agree—full agreement on contentious issues or detailed policy guidelines is not likely.

Notwithstanding, some proponents maintain that much of value lies in the process, not necessarily in the end product. They argue that regardless of the end result, the process could serve to renew strategic consensus among the member states of the alliance to the greatest possible extent. On the other hand, critics counter that the process may also open up dangerous and divisive debates that could distract the alliance from its on-going operations.

Addressing Emerging Challenges

Observers expect that a new Strategic Concept would likely reiterate many basic elements from the 1999 version, including the importance of deterrence, military capabilities, collective defense, and the transatlantic link. The document would also likely state NATO's approach to future enlargement and provide an updated assessment of the global security picture and the multidisciplinary nature of many of today's threats.

Some observers hope that guidelines laid down in a new strategic concept could provide greater direction for NATO's role in addressing emerging security challenges. For example, subject to the debates outlined above, a new strategic concept might discuss the development of capabilities

³⁵ For more information see The Alliance's Strategic Concept, Approved by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Washington, D.C. on 23rd and 24th April 1999. <http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/1999/p99-065e.htm>

related to crisis management, stabilization and reconstruction operations, homeland security, missile defense, and counterterrorism. The 2008 Bucharest Summit Declaration opened the door for increased NATO engagement in areas such as cyber security and energy security, and NATO has recently engaged in maritime anti-piracy efforts.³⁶ NATO's intended development of capabilities for such tasks could be clarified.

Such discussions could fall under wider clarifications about the criteria for and extent of “out-of-area” operations; NATO's approach to global partnerships with non-members; internal alliance dynamics, force structure, and burden sharing; and proposed linkages between military and civilian capabilities as expressed in the so-called Comprehensive Approach. Finally, a new Strategic Concept might place increased emphasis on the NATO-EU relationship.

NATO-EU Relations³⁷

France's full reintegration into NATO and its parallel support for a strengthened EU defense capacity has revitalized discussion about the level of cooperation between the European Union and NATO and the possibility of a strengthened partnership. Despite overlapping membership and interests, NATO and the EU have struggled to establish a cooperative and complementary relationship.³⁸ Over the past decade, the United States has supported the European Security and Defense Policy (ESDP) as a means for Europe to develop security capabilities, under the condition that ESDP avoid the “three Ds” outlined by then-Secretary of State Albright in 1998: decoupling/delinking (from NATO strategy and decision making), duplication (of NATO structures and resources), and discrimination (against non-EU members of NATO). The 2003 Berlin Plus agreement, allowing EU-led missions access to NATO assets and planning capabilities, remains the biggest step forward to date and the cornerstone of NATO-EU relations.³⁹ Berlin Plus reflects a pragmatic conclusion that NATO and the EU need not be competitors, but are better served as partners sharing a pool of resources and offering each other an array of complementary capabilities. Nevertheless, the old debate remains a source of tension: some believe fully independent EU capabilities are desirable and necessary, allowing the EU to undertake missions that NATO does not choose to pursue, and others worry that a robust ESDP could mean duplication and transatlantic divergence at the expense of NATO and U.S. leadership of the alliance.⁴⁰

While NATO-EU cooperation exists at the tactical level, the two institutions are unable to share sensitive intelligence information, thereby hindering their ability to cooperate on matters of strategic importance. One intractable problem poses a particular obstacle in this regard. Cyprus

³⁶ See Bucharest Summit Declaration, Issued by the Heads of State and Government participating in the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Bucharest on 3 April 2008.

<http://www.nato.int/docu/pr/2008/p08-049e.html>

³⁷ Prepared by Derek Mix, Analyst in European Affairs.

³⁸ 21 countries belong to both NATO and the EU. There are six non-NATO members of the EU (Austria, Cyprus, Finland, Ireland, Malta, and Sweden) and five non-EU members of NATO (Canada, Iceland, Norway, Turkey, and the United States).

³⁹ Berlin Plus agreement, NATO Allied Command Operations, Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, updated 21 June 2006. http://www.nato.int/shape/news/2003/shape_eu/se030822a.htm

⁴⁰ See also CRS Report RL32342, *NATO and the European Union*, by Kristin Archick and Paul Gallis.

and Malta are members of the EU, but do not have a security agreement with NATO. Citing this reason, Turkey objects to Cyprus and Malta participating in any NATO-EU discussions that involve sharing intelligence or other sensitive information. With the EU refusing to allow the exclusion of any of its members from such meetings, meaningful discussion at the political and strategic level is effectively blocked (beneath the surface of Turkey's stance are linkages with its protracted bid for EU membership and the issue of divided Cyprus). Many observers argue that a broader and deeper NATO-EU relationship would likely require resolution of this impasse.

A stronger NATO-EU relationship might include joint planning in areas such as crisis management, defense policy, and military procurement. NATO and the EU might also institute greater coordination of complementary capabilities for expeditionary missions, stabilization and reconstruction operations, and security sector reform programs. Such tighter relations could help avoid potentially wasteful duplication in the development of such capabilities. Some experts assert that, with the EU's security and defense policy a work in progress, the strengths of the EU continue to lie in the depth of its civilian capabilities in areas such as civilian crisis management, humanitarian operations, and police, judicial, and administrative training. They argue that aligning the EU's capabilities with NATO's strengths in a flexible, well-coordinated, and harmonious NATO-EU relationship would give the Euro-Atlantic community more and better-rounded resources as well as enhanced effectiveness in pursuing its external goals.

Afghanistan is often cited as an example where improved NATO-EU cooperation could have an important impact. Given the reluctance of some European governments to contribute additional forces to ISAF, some experts suggest that Europe might make greater contributions in terms of vital civilian capabilities that could fall under EU domain: assisting infrastructure projects; police, judiciary, and civil service training; economic development; and the development of health and education systems. For example, the EU recently decided to increase the size of its nascent police training mission (EUPOL) from 180 to 400 personnel. Some analysts have noted, however, that overall aid efforts to Afghanistan are poorly coordinated. Many believe that an increased EU role within an enhanced NATO-EU framework could benefit civilian aid programs and improve civil-military coordination.

Transformation: Capabilities and the NATO Response Force⁴¹

NATO's evolving mission in Afghanistan has revived longstanding discussions on the alliance's capacity to operate "out of area" and on whether its capabilities are sufficient to effectively counter emerging threats. Conflicts in the Balkans during the 1990s first highlighted the need for more mobile forces, for greater technological equality between the United States and its allies, and for better interoperability. At its 2002 meeting in Prague, dubbed the "transformation summit," NATO sought to address these needs primarily by creating a rapid-reaction force and adopting a new capabilities initiative. The Prague Capabilities Commitment (PCC) called for the allies' development of modernized equipment such as strategic lift, aerial refuelers, and precision-guided munitions. Analysts cautioned that the success of PCC would hinge upon increased spending and changed procurement priorities, particularly by the European allies. At NATO's 2004 Istanbul summit and its 2006 Riga summit, the alliance reaffirmed the goals of PCC. The

⁴¹ Prepared by Carl Ek, Specialist in International Relations.

2008 Bucharest summit declaration did not mention PCC, but, in light of NATO missions, particularly in Afghanistan, stressed the urgency of acquiring specific capabilities such as airlift and communications.⁴²

In October 2008, Britain's Conservative shadow defense secretary Liam Fox and former U.S. Deputy Assistant Defense Secretary Daniel Fata wrote that "the alliance's report card on developing and funding key enablers and critical capabilities has been less than glowing. Non-U.S. annual alliance-wide defense spending continues to decline. This has translated into reduced operational defense capability, i.e., high-altitude helicopters, deployable joint logistics and UAVs for an organization ... that has declared Afghanistan to be its top priority"⁴³

Missile defense may increasingly be viewed as an emerging NATO capability priority. The alliance has already approved a theater missile defense system intended to protect deployed forces. It also has been discussing the viability of ballistic missile defense, particularly in the context of the Bush Administration's proposal to deploy interceptor missiles in Poland and radar in the Czech Republic in order to guard against a possible threat from Iran. NATO leaders will be reviewing the conclusions of an earlier-mandated study on the feasibility of a complementary "bolt-on" anti-missile capability that would protect the southeastern part of Europe.

NATO Response Force (NRF)

In November 2002, the alliance agreed to the concept of a NATO Response Force (NRF.) The new unit is an expeditionary, stand-alone force capable of being deployed rapidly over long distances to respond to a wide variety of security challenges globally, ranging from Article 5 (collective defense) missions, to such non-Article 5 operations as counter-terrorism, emergency evacuation, crisis response, and disaster assistance. The NRF was envisioned as consisting of a force of up to 25,000 troops, capable of being deployed in five days, and of being sustained in a remote location for 30 days or more; member countries contribute air, land, or naval forces for six-month rotations.

Although the NRF reached full capability in November 2006, fulfilling commitments to the NRF in recent years has become a chronic challenge due to the strong demand for troops for NATO operations. A British analyst stated that "Afghanistan has to a certain extent usurped, or stolen the thunder, of the NATO Response Force."⁴⁴ According to a U.S. Defense Department official, the air and maritime components of the NRF have not been severely affected, but member states have had difficulty fulfilling their land forces commitments. The U.S. government has reportedly signaled to allies that if they face a choice between contributing assets to NRF or ISAF, the Pentagon would prefer that troops be deployed to Afghanistan. The alliance remains strongly committed to the NRF, but, given this strain on resources, there has been a shift toward a "graduated" concept: NATO will seek to maintain a core force of 12,000 to ensure there is a framework to rapidly expand to the full complement of 25,000.⁴⁵

⁴² For additional information, see CRS Report RS21659, *NATO's Prague Capabilities Commitment*, by Carl Ek.

⁴³ "Don't Downsize NATO's Mission – Alliance Must Remain Full-Spectrum Force," *Defense News*, October 6, 2008.

⁴⁴ "As NATO Eyes Cuts to Reaction Force, Doubts Grow About Mission," *Defense News*, October 8, 2007.

⁴⁵ CRS interview of U.S. Department of Defense official, February 5, 2009.

Meanwhile, at the NATO Defense Ministers' February 19-20, 2009 meeting in Poland, British Defense Minister John Hutton proposed the establishment of a 3,000-strong rapid deployment force designated to defend the treaty area. Some observers expressed concern that this plan, emphasizing territorial defense, would signal the end of the NRF. Others, however, believe that the plan is intended to reassure NATO's eastern European member states that their troop deployments to Afghanistan will not leave their countries with weakened defenses and that they will continue to be protected against Russia.⁴⁶

⁴⁶ "UK Calls For Unit To Defend NATO Territory," *Financial Times*, February 19, 2009; "NATO: A Disappointing Summit," *Stratfor.com*, February 20, 2009.

Appendix A. Glossary

KEY NATO DOCUMENTS AND DECISION-MAKING BODIES⁴⁷

North Atlantic Treaty	NATO's founding treaty, signed in Washington, DC, on April 4, 1949. In the treaty, the 12 original signatory nations -- Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and the United States -- and all subsequent NATO members resolve to unite their efforts for collective defense and for the preservation of peace and security.
Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty	The basis for the alliance's core principle of collective defense. States that an armed attack against one or more allies shall be considered an attack against all. Commits each member to taking the actions, including the use of armed force, it deems necessary to assist the ally attacked.
North Atlantic Council (NAC)	NATO's supreme political decision-making body. The Council, composed of permanent representatives of all NATO countries, oversees all political and military processes relating to alliance security. It is the only body within the alliance which derives its authority explicitly from the North Atlantic Treaty.
Military Committee	The highest military authority in NATO, providing NATO's civilian decision-making bodies -- the North Atlantic Council, the Defence Planning Committee and the Nuclear Planning Group -- with advice on military matters.
Defence Planning Committee	The senior decision-making body on matters relating to the integrated military structure of the alliance and collective defense matters.
Nuclear Planning Group	The ultimate authority within NATO with regard to nuclear policy issues. France is not a member and will retain its independence from the Group after its expected reintegration into the alliance's military structures.
Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR)	One of NATO's two strategic commanders and head of Allied Command Operations (ACO). SACEUR, traditionally a United States Flag or General officer, is dual-hatted as Commander of the US European Command.
Supreme Allied Commander Transformation (SACT)	One of NATO's two strategic commanders and the commanding officer of Allied Command Transformation (ACT). SACT is responsible for promoting and overseeing the continuing transformation of alliance forces and capabilities.
Secretary General	The alliance's top international civil servant and chairperson of the NAC. The Secretary General serves a four-year term and is responsible for steering alliance consultation and decision-making processes and for ensuring that decisions are implemented. He or she is NATO's chief spokesperson and the head of the organization's international staff.
Strategic Concept	Authoritative statement of NATO's objectives and the basis for alliance policy. First published in 1991, revised in 1999.

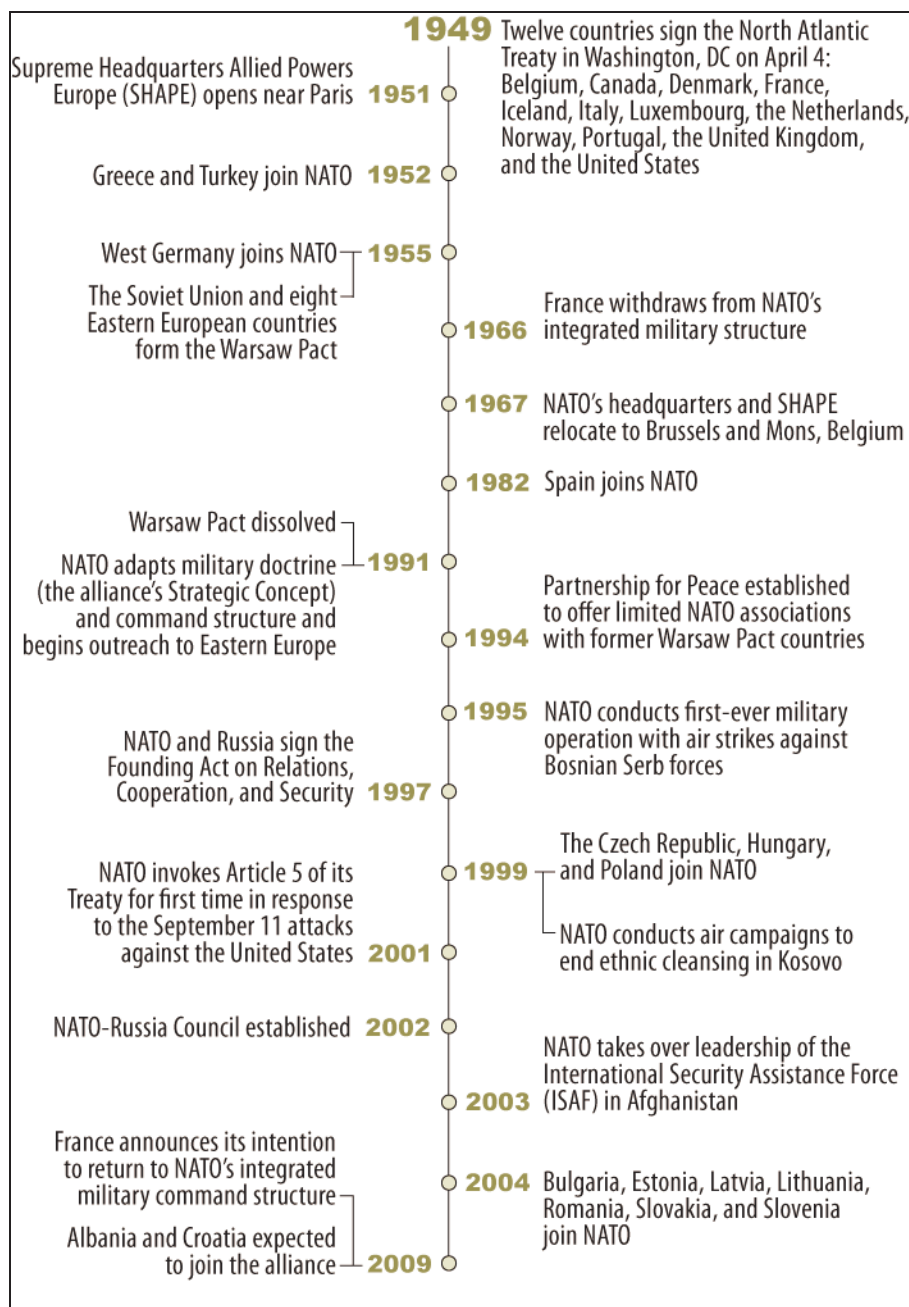
⁴⁷ Prepared by Lisa Mages, Information Research Specialist.

NATO PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURES

Partner Countries	NATO has developed partnerships with non-NATO countries, promoting security dialogue and cooperation, since the early 1990s. NATO meets partner countries from Europe, Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the wider Mediterranean area, as well as other partners across the globe, on a regular basis to discuss political and security-related issues.
Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC)	Established in 1997 to provide the overall political framework for cooperation between NATO and its partner countries.
Partnership for Peace (PfP)	Provides a framework for bilateral cooperation with each partner country on an individual basis.
Membership Action Plan (MAP)	Assists aspirant partner countries in their preparations for NATO membership by providing a framework for NATO to channel assistance and practical support to them.
Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation, and Security	Signed in 1997, provides the formal basis for NATO-Russia relations.
NATO-Russia Council	Established in 2002, brings together the 26 NATO Allies and Russia to identify and pursue opportunities for joint action.

Appendix B. NATO Timeline

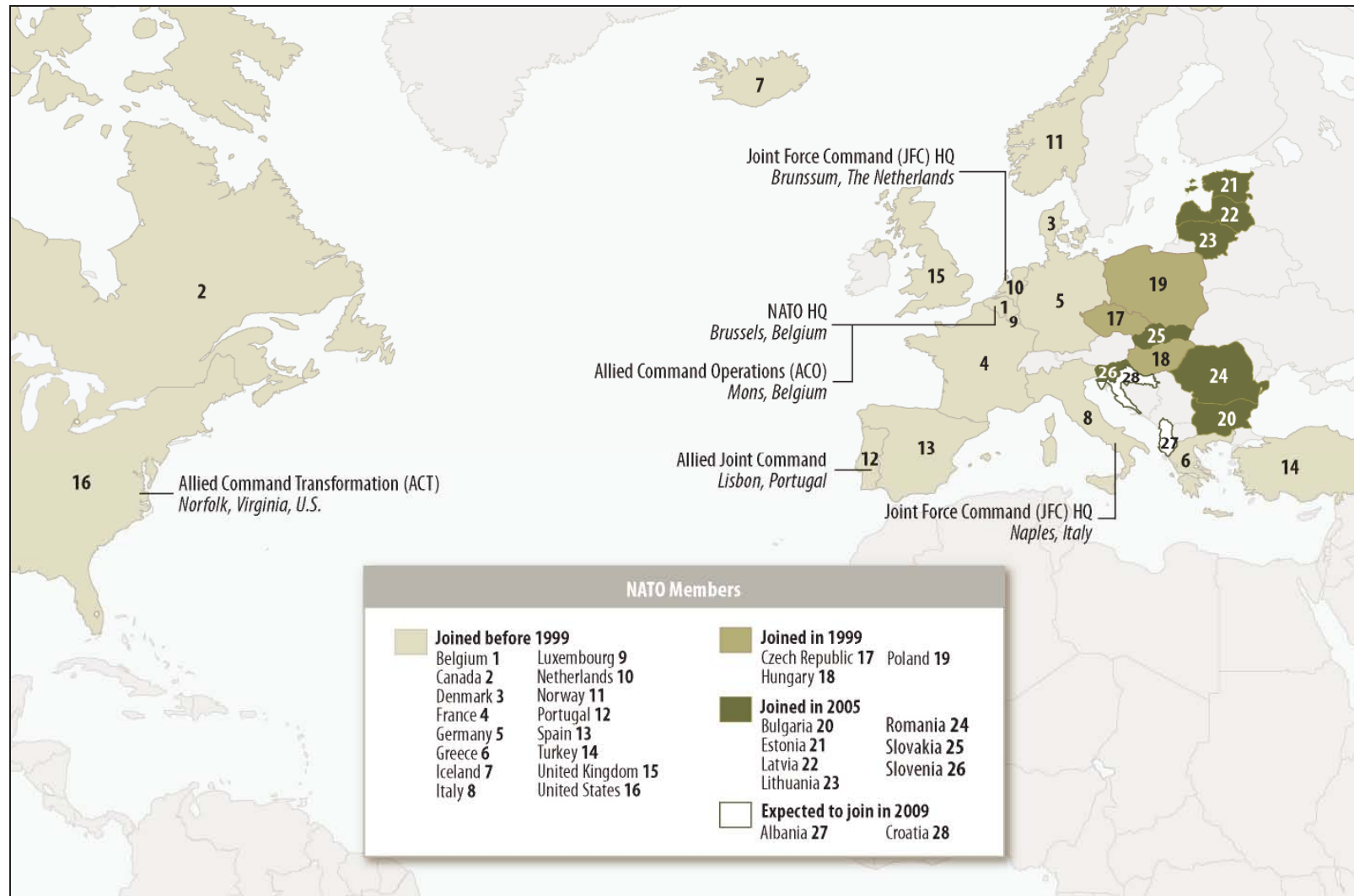
Figure B-1. NATO Timeline



Source: CRS. Content by Lisa Mages, Information Research Specialist.

Appendix C. NATO Map

Figure C-I. NATO Map



Source: Map Resources, adapted by CRS.

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